



# Fast Facts

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

PS17

## SKIN CANCER PREVENTION PROGRAM

### Mission

The mission of the Skin Cancer Prevention Program (SCPP) is to increase public awareness about the dangers of unprotected sun exposure and to increase the practice of sun-safe behaviors to decrease the future incidence of skin cancer among Californians. The current primary target groups of the SCPP are children under 14 years of age, their parents, child care staff, and outdoor workers. Secondly, all Californians are potential recipients of SCPP materials and services.

### Current Resources

The SCPP has produced a sun safety education package for child care staff to use with children 3 to 5 years of age. The package includes the following items:

- The *California Early Childhood Sun Protection Curriculum*.
- *Hot Shots* – a video on sun safety.
- A poster featuring “Alex the Alligator.”
- The *Sun Protection Guideline ‘Model Statements’ for Outdoor Play*.

In addition, the SCPP has created two sun safety kits for outdoor workers. One kit is designed for use by road and building construction entities, while the other kit is intended for park and recreation facilities. These and other sun protection materials are available free of charge from the SCPP.

### Key Skin Cancer Facts

- Skin cancer is considered an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In California, there are more new cases of skin cancer each year than the total new cases of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung, and colon combined! **Currently, one in five people can expect to get skin cancer in his and her lifetime.**
- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight causes 90 percent of all skin cancer. A child's skin, particularly before age 10, is especially vulnerable to UV rays. Childhood sunburns increase a child's risk of developing skin cancer as an adult. Even a suntan is harmful. Tanning is actually an outward sign of internal skin damage.

- During April 2000, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, for the first time, listed solar radiation (including UV rays) as a “known human carcinogen.” Thus, the department effectively stated that UV rays have officially joined the ranks of known cancer-causing elements, such as arsenic, asbestos, radon, and tobacco smoke.
- Skin cancer rates continue to dramatically increase, as they have for decades. Individuals, however, can do a lot to reduce their risk of skin cancer.

### **Tips to Prevent Skin Cancer**

- Reduce exposure to sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Cover your skin with a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, and long pants.
- Seek shade when outside.
- Wear UV-protective sunglasses.
- Apply broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB), SPF 15 or greater sunscreen to exposed skin 30 minutes before going outside.
- Use lip balm labeled SPF 15 or greater.
- Avoid tanning salons, booths, and sunlamps.

### **Contact Information**

Contact the SSCP at: Skin Cancer Prevention Program, P.O. Box 942732, MS-662, Sacramento, CA 94234-7320. Telephone: (916) 322-2154. Fax: (916) 323-1835. E-mail: [amanthe@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:amanthe@dhs.ca.gov). Web Page: [www.ca5aday.com](http://www.ca5aday.com). (Click on “Skin Cancer Prevention.”)